

TSAC Update

Helping Students Achieve Their Goals Since 1974 February 2007 Vol. 8

Legislative Update

TSAC anticipates several bills will be introduced for 2007 in the Tennessee 105th General Assembly pertaining to student financial aid and many of those will affect the lottery scholarship program. At publication time, the following bills have been introduced:

SB0025

Changes the income eligibility requirement for receipt of the need-based ASPIRE award, HOPE access grant, and HOPE scholarship for nontraditional students from incomes not exceeding \$36,000 to incomes not exceeding \$45,000.

SB0050

Provides supplemental awards from net lottery proceeds to HOPE Scholarship recipients who are majoring in or enrolled in an approved teacher training program to teach in a critical shortage field as defined by the Tennessee Department of Education.

SB0073

Redefines the Tennessee HOPE Foster Child Tuition Grant award so that award amounts are reduced only by amounts received by an eligible student from grants and scholarships, and not by financial aid from loans and work-study programs.

SB0113

Renames the Tennessee HOPE scholarships to the "Tennessee Cohen HOPE scholarships."

If you want to examine a particular bill listed above, you may do so by going to the General Assembly Web site at <http://www.legislature.state.tn.us> and click on Legislation. Type in the bill number in the dialog box, click on Submit Query and you should be at a site where you can view general information about the particular bill. To pull up additional important information on the bill click the links provided.

Note that the legislature is planning on improving its Web site in the near future and search techniques may change.

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Get Ready for TSAC's Board Meeting!

TSAC's first Board of Directors meeting of the new year will take place on Thursday, March 22, 2007 from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. in the 18th floor conference room of the James Robertson Parkway Towers. The meeting agenda will be posted online after March 9 with hard copies mailed to board members and alternate designees.

A Message from the Director's Corner



We're only a couple weeks away from Tennessee's second College Goal Sunday, and all of us at TSAC are excited! We've more than doubled the number of sites from our first year, and barring a repeat of last year's freak snow storm, we expect a record number of students and parents.

Your volunteer efforts make College Goal Sunday possible, and on behalf of the thousands of Tennesseans who will benefit, I thank you. I will be helping at the location closest to me (Volunteer State Community College) and I've even drafted my wife to pitch in! If you haven't registered as a volunteer yet, please take a minute to do that now by going to www.CollegeGoalSundayTN.org. We can't do it without you. Thanks!

Bob Ruble

Annual TELS Report Available Online

The Tennessee Higher Education Commission has released its annual Tennessee Higher Education Lottery Scholarship Program Annual Report showing outcomes through fall 2006. The report, which includes recipient demographic and retention information, is available online at CollegePaysTN.com. Click on Money for College then Lottery Scholarships. The report is located at the bottom of the page. [Click here to view.](#)

Some of the executive summary findings include that more than 56,000 students received lottery funded scholarships with total award allocations in excess of \$136 million. Additionally, the Dual Enrollment Grant program was added and over 5,400 high school students participated and more than 10,000 students utilized the Wilder-Naifeh Technical Skills Grant program. Check it out!

Meet Stephanie Aylor, TSAC's Loan Expert

Stephanie Aylor, our Loan Program Administrator, has served TSAC for 14 years and has a wealth of knowledge about the ins and outs of student loans. In fact, she got her start in higher education working in the student loan division at Commerce Union Bank.

While many people associate TSAC with the lottery scholarship program, we are also the state's designated federal guaranty agency responsible for the administration of post secondary educational loan programs authorized by the Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965. That means TSAC guarantees student loans under the Federal Family Education Loan Program.

So the average day for Stephanie includes interaction with financial aid officers, borrowers, lenders such as banks and credit unions, federal government agencies and loan processing IT vendors, to name a few. Stephanie is an

indispensable team player who helps ensure TSAC runs smoothly and we value her contribution.



In her spare time, the native Nashvillian works on home improvement projects and plays with Pepper and Sable, her two cats, and Randy, her dog. She is currently teaching herself to knit, crochet and sew. Stephanie says she loves music, but her taste tends to run in cycles, and currently it is country such as Rascal Flatts. She is very excited about becoming a Great Aunt, as her niece is expecting her first child in June.

Comments from Stephanie:

Although I fell into higher education through my experience at a bank, it has been a rewarding career path, personally and professionally. I am especially proud of TSAC's efforts at loan default prevention, such as the recent Default Prevention Summit we hosted with financial aid administrators across the state. My goal is that students avoid borrowing for higher education altogether, but if they have to do it, that they borrow prudently and avoid defaulting on their loans.

High School Counselor Interns Being Recruited!

Recruitment of school counselors and post-secondary institutions to participate in the High School Counselor Internship Program is off to an early start for the summer 2007 launch. This is a joint effort between TSAC and TASFAA to provide opportunities for high school counselors to learn more about financial aid and to have the hands-on experience of working in a financial aid office. Last year we had 16 high school counselors participate and 11 institutions serve as host. Of course we are hoping that we will have increased participation from our school counselors and post-secondary institutions this summer.

Applications for the school

counselors and the post-secondary institutions have been updated and placed on the TSAC Web site. The school counselors must attend a training workshop prior to beginning their work assignments. The dates of the training workshop are June 11-13 at Fall Creek Falls State Park. Please share this information with the high school counselors in your area and consider being a host institution for this great program. If you have questions or need additional information about the program contact Darolyn Porter, of TSAC at darolyn.porter@state.tn.us or Chrystal Lampkin of TASFAA at cdlampkin@north-eaststate.edu. [Click here to view application.](#)

Upcoming Events

- 2/9/07 - 2/10/07
SASFAA Board Meeting in Nashville, TN

Upcoming Conferences:

- 2/11/07 - 2/14/07
SASFAA Annual Conference in Nashville, TN
- 3/22/07
TSAC Board of Directors Meeting in Nashville, TN
- 4/15/07 - 4/18/07
TASFAA Spring Conference in Knoxville, TN

Change in Responsibilities of High School GPA Verification

TSAC is pleased to announce that financial aid staff will no longer be required to verify high school grade point averages for purposes of the HOPE Scholarship. Rather, financial aid offices may rely on students' grade point averages provided by the high schools. This change

will become effective with the spring 2007 semester. This decision comes in response to discussion at the Lottery Scholarship Open Forum concerning interpretation of the statute, T.C.A. 49-4-903.

Postsecondary institutions may choose to verify student GPAs for

accuracy but they are not required to do so. However, if there is conflicting GPA data that may affect a student's award, TSAC expects the college to resolve the inconsistency. If you have questions, please contact Tim Phelps at (615) 253-7441 or tim.phelps@state.tn.us.

* * ATTENTION * *

PLEASE note that the only toll free numbers that should be given to students are as follows:

- ▶ Parents and Students with general financial aid questions need to call: (800) 342-1663 OR (615) 741-1346
- ▶ Parents and Students with LOAN DEFAULT questions must call: (800) 257-6528
- ▶ If you are an Administrator, Lender or Counselor that knows with whom you need to speak at TSAC, you may call: (866) 291-2675 OR (615) 741-3000

Please see that all automated lines, publications, etc. in your office are corrected in order to insure that accurate information is being distributed. We greatly appreciate your assistance in this matter.